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Jan. 14th 1918. Wordsworth's Preface to Lyrical Ballads 1800. (W's Literary Criticism - Frowde 1905)

Much of his talk of reform is repeated today by people like Drinkwater. Wordsworth talks of using the "language
13. really used by men": Dwells upon the advantages of
14 humble life — how the language of the poor is a more
"permanent & philosophical language. He thinks it high time for poets tried to stem the degradation of the standard of taste, due to men living in large cities
17. & needing excitement. He uses the phrase "poetic
18 diction" for abstractions &c. Poems are often written in the language of prose; there is no essential difference
19 between the language of prose & poetry. The better parts
20 gems of Gray's sonnets are prose pure & simple.
29. A poet does not write for connoisseurs; he is a
30 man speaking to men.
25. It is more difficult to tell the truth in history or in biography than in poetry. Poetry appeals to our sense of pleasure. ~~This~~ "We have no sympathy ~~but~~
26 but what is propagated by pleasure"; "of all knowledge": or
"Poetry the breath & finer spirit of all Discoveries — science & by poetry:
27 Poetry will assimilate all ... chemistry will be expounded properly ... the theory that all words & ideas can be used in poetry is much in vogue with us now) (Davidson developed this: indeed,

31. W's reasons for writing in verse: the additional pleasure, given by associations of pleasure, partly derived from ~~the~~ rhyme & metre.

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34. poetry "takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity"
36. He says that there can be no doubt that of two ~~equal~~ passages, ~~verse~~ of equal merit one in verse & one in prose, that in verse will be read 100 times for once that of the prose is read.
39. Says that an accurate taste in poetry is an acquired talent, only produced by thought & study of the best models. In this he is supported by Sir J. Reynolds.

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Coleridge Biog. Lit.

Colvin's Life of Keats.

This large book came out a month or two ago. It is an old-fashioned, scholarly work, I suppose irrefutable as far as the facts go, & gives painstaking skeletons of the longer poems, & much discourse upon technical points of metre & language.

Keats was born in 1795. His father an ostler; mother consumptive & said to be immoral. C: traces her in K's: morbid passions: dividing him into the "well-balancing half, & the hysterical half, father & mother respectively.

20. Influence of Spenser enormous upon K: as a boy.

25. a fault finder with everything established.

"Spensorian vowels that elope with ease,
And float along like birds o'er summer seas."

Homer sonnet in 1816.

38 Leigh Hunt had great influence; & was partly the cause of Blackwood's hostility: L. H: in prison for Disrespect to Regent.

Great influence of pictures on Keats.

54. Lamb said that "Shelley's voice was the "most

70. obnoxious squeak I ever was tormented with": of his poetry "thin sown with profit or delight": "bending, flexible form".

Hazlitt also on Shelley
(this is Essay on Paradox)

80. "peculiarly talentless expression such as may be seen on the face of some seamen." Love of hearing the wind & seeing it over the corn. First book out in 1817.

(Coleridge Biog. Lit: on poetry).

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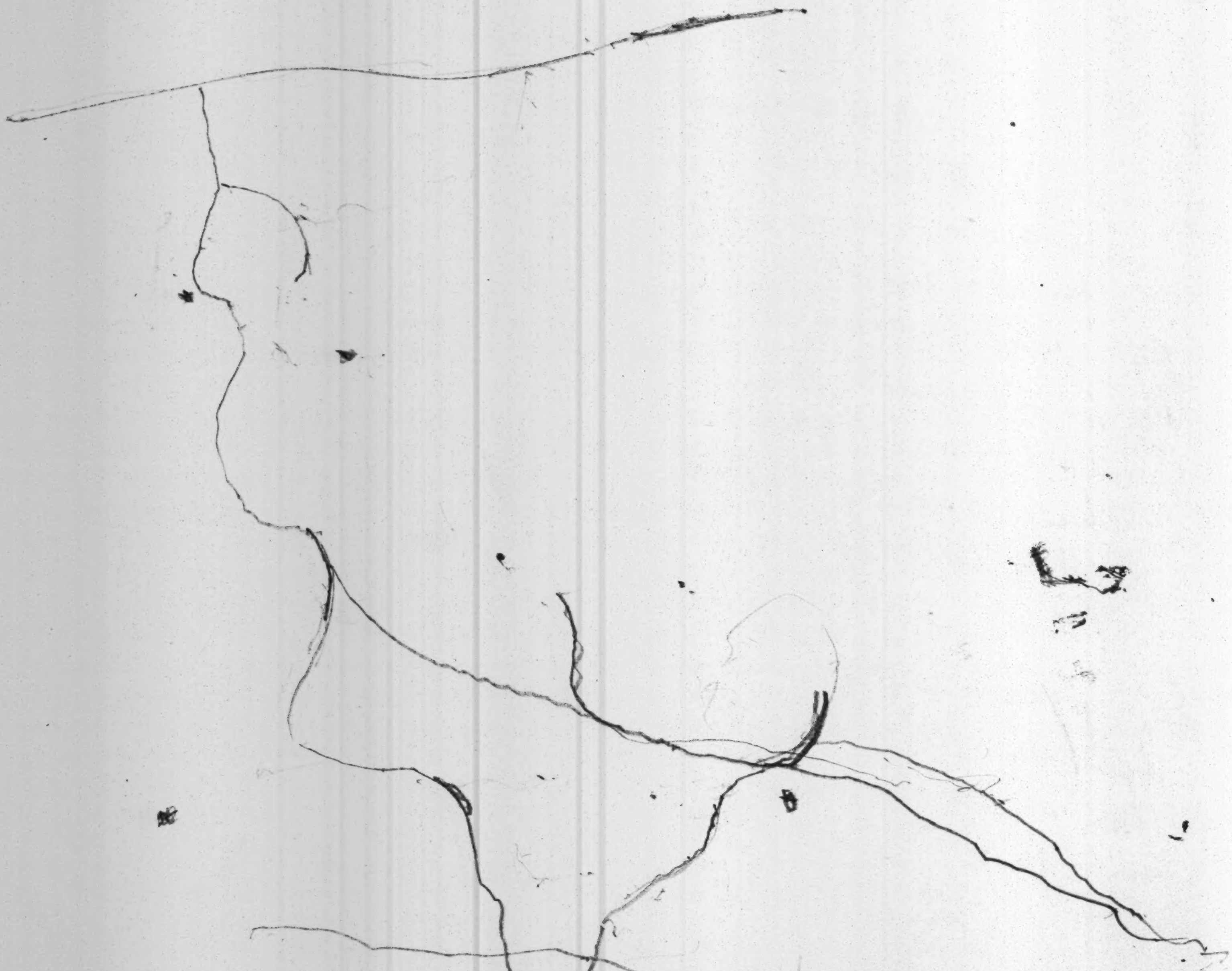
Essays & Studies by Mary Suddard.
1912.



128 "It is not the effect of nature in her personal self that he realizes & ponders over" C.

133. K. first book thought by a gentleman "to be "no better than a take in".

147. K: "vowels shd. be so managed as not to clash with one another so as to hear the melody, — & yet that they shd. be interchanged, like differing notes of music to prevent monotony ...

156. O for a life of sensations rather than of thoughts!"

165. Do not the Lovers of Poetry like to have a little region to wander in, where they may pick & choose, & in wh: the images are so numerous that many are forgotten & found new in a second reading ... " K's. reason for writing a ~~long~~ ~~new~~ poem. Endymion.

171. K. the descendant more than any of his contemps. of the Elizabethans.

172 "the ideas of Endymion only now yielding themselves to the student. C

1: the soul pursuing beauty must do so with other human beings.

2. that a passion for the various beauties of earth is identical with the passion for transcendental & essential Beauty.

K's love of the moon.

205. En^{n}. "parable of the poetic soul seeking communion with beauty".

217. K. not a word painter: beauties he felt

Preface to *Alastor*.
Henry Crabb Robinson Diaries:

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rather than saw.

235. Influence of Wordsworth on the "human" doctrine of Endymion.

236. Influence of the preface to Alastor. The prose style of Keats in his letters must have some affinity with his poetry.

252. "We hate poetry that has a palpable design upon us" K.

254 "poetry ... sh[oul]d strike the reader as a wording of his own highest thoughts, & appear almost a remembrance." (true too of criticism)

254. "I have great reason to be content, for thank God, I can read, & perhaps understand, Shakespeare to his depths."

255. "The best genius have but a portion of good in them." K's gift for both music & painting. Severn played him Haydn when he was dying.

265. "There is but one way for me. The road lies through application, study & thought. I will pursue it."

267. "Exploring the dark passages of life".

276. nature interested him less & people more as he grew older.

277. "Scenery is fine, but human nature is finer."

I suppose all these quotations are from the letters. The old impression is deepened of the sanity & sweetness of K's nature, save, I think, in The

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Case of Fanny B. If she was engaged, & apparently cared for him, & nursed him, sent him a cornelian, a paper knife &c: his agonies seem exaggerated: nor does one much sympathise with the conventional jealousy. The affair seems an Early Victorian affair, more than would have expected. All the end terrible.

Gave up writing. His idea of being a 'dreamer' who must be despised as such only came towards the end. Influence of Wordsworth: but what did W: do, save write?

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Coleridge's Table Talk & Omniana.

Omniana (in my edition)
Reading this through, I was struck by C's greater than remembered humanity & ~~subtlety~~ humour. His discrimination generally very subtle, but often fine into the bargain:
335. a good passage upon the falseness of sympathy: No doubt he heard comes from uncertainty. — saw much into character — more than one has come to think owing to his character. always heard of as a spout of words, not as a person with insight.
"in every face a history or a prophecy".
343. It is unworthy to do nothing but enjoy poetry.
356. Evils of procrastination.
379. The handsome hypocrisies that spring from the
385. desire of distinction.

Table Talk — Oxford edition. 1918.

C. thought Old Mortality & Guy Mannering the best of Scott.
41. Euripides like a modern Frenchman — never so happy as when giving a slap at the gods altogether.
41. Snuff the final cause of the human nose.
56 "If you take from Virgil his diction & metre, what do you leave him?"
"65" "I have a smack of Hamlet myself."
73. definition of prose & poetry: prose = words in their best order; poetry = best words in best order.

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74. genius can't exist with envy.
86 – liked Jane A's novels.
91 – "poetry must be good sense".
93. "no subjectivity in Homeric authors" – argument for their being many authors.
103. had been flogged into being a Christian.
106. Mrs. Barbauld's criticism of the A. M. lacked a moral.
108. works of imagination should be written in very plain language.
115. on Rabelais (good). Swift compared with R.
117. C. a post Imp.: "th overcoming difficulties the way of decadence."
118. everyone born an Aristotelian or a platonist.
132. "I have no ear whatever; – but intensest delight in music, & can detect good from bad.
135. Col. in favour of adult suffrage.
141. C. at pictures.
163 – on Home rule.
166 – Children grateful before they have learnt to dana.
182. Old Greek & Latin same order as English: Virgil & Tibullus not.
184. on beauty of Greek language.
185. America names.
189. Wm. greatest phil. poet since Milton.
190. great things done by individuals, not acts of Parl.
194 English habit of praising foreigners to their own cost.
195 Milton's love of music greater than of painting.

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198. Keats. "The school is your father &c".
201. Great minds androgynous.
Home rule to be an absolute division.
205. One can't imitate Sh^re: has no manner.
213. The sonnets written to a woman: or 20 ig.
239. As a boy Aeschylus; youth & middle age
252. Euripides; now in declining years Sophocles, the
most perfect.
When Johnson's talk the bow-wow manner
256. Coleridge seems to have been a mass of sensibilities.
258. I love Purcell — the effect of music in helping him
to write poetry.
No pleasure from associations with places – loving
260. Collaterally.
Philanthropists hostile to the individual but benevolent
261. to the race.
C's bad memory for words.
262. against Gibbon.
263. Greatest pleasure in Milton's poetry comes from his
Egoism. M: himself that you see.
267. Tristram Shandy scarcely readable by women.
Higher powers can only act with help of lower.
269. Scott's novels the only book he could read when ill.
Landor cd. not make his poetry into a whole.
284. Chronological order best for poems.
286. I take no interest in facts — they must refer
293. to something else.

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~~261. philanthropists always wrong; in heart hostile to individuals, but benevolent to the race.~~

293. Th^rs^ way of creating sentences — not seeing them entire first.

293. " Crabbe gives me little or no pleasure.

295. Sh^re^ not more intelligible to his own time than to ours.

3.6. Excellence of verse to be untranslatable —

" printers devils personifications (Gray).

344. "The impossibility of any man's being a great poet without being first a ~~grea~~ good man." Ben Jonson. Ded. of Volpone.

(Allsops recollections).

4.6. on Scott's novels. less indecent than Sterne, but none of his characters so good: in all ^good^ subjects there is struggle between opposites.

421. Lamb essentially a Xtian, tho' a sceptic.

430. good description of Cobbett.

437. " works written upon "scraps of Sibylline leaves, including margins of books & blank pages."

440 — Strange that no great poet has come from the lower class except Burns.

441. Crashaw & St Theresa perhaps suggested the first thought of Christabel.

445. his discrimination between one's feelings for poor & rich.

447. Greater part of L. B. sold to seafaring men, who thought that A. M. must have relation to Nautical matters.

452. Shelleys wish to consult Co

470. Wordsworth __all__ man: least feminity in his mind.

Sidney's Apologie.
14th Chap of Biog. Lit:
Wth preface to 2nd Ed. of L. B.
Shelley's defence.

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Morley. Recollections. vol. 1.

275 "I have often ungratefully said, though I am commonly a man of good though pretty serious spirits, that "low spirits" are what we call the mood in which we see things as they are. I know that d'Alembert has somewhere said something of the sort. So, here is Byron:

The glance
Of Melancholy is a fearful gift;
What is it but the telescope of truth
Which strips the distance of its fantasies.
And brings life near in utter nakedness,
Making the cold reality too real!

---

251. "The last half of book IV (Lucretius) is among the finest things in great poetry. It is real religion"

What a thick shady, solemn book this is — the autobiography of a super butler; all these politicians having the sleek pompous & portentous manners of the best family servants. Literature becomes infinitely decorous; & I find it a relief to turn to the novels of L. Merrick, about chorus girls, where at least something seems alive & quick & irresponsible.

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Endymion.

Book I. p. 77. Oxford Edition - Buxton Forman.

Wherein lies happiness? In that which becks
Our ready minds to fellowship divine,
A fellowship with essence; till we shine
Full alchemiz'd, & free of space. Behold
The clear religion of heaven!

. . . .

Feel we these things? — that moment have we stept
Into a sort of oneness, & our state
Is like a floating spirit's. But there are
Richer entanglements, enthralments far
More self-destroying, leading, by degrees,
To the chief intensity: the crown of these
Is made of love & friendship, & sits high
Upon the forehead of humanity.

. . . .

And, truly, I would rather be struck dumb,
Than speak against this ardent listlessness:
For I have ever thought that it might bless
The world with benefits unknowingly;
As does the nightingale, upperched high
And cloister'd among cool & bunched leaves —
She sings but to her love, nor e'er conceives
How tip-toe Night holds back her dark-grey hood.
Just so may love, although 'tis understood
The mere commingling of passionate breath,
Produce more than our searching witnesseth;

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What I know not: but who, of men, can tell
That flowers would bloom, or that green fruit would swell
To melting pulp, that fish would have bright mail,
The Earth its dower of river, wood & vale,
The meadows runnels, runnels pebble-stones,
The seed its harvest, or the lute its tones,
Tones ravishment, or ravishment its sweet
If human souls did never kiss & greet?

Book 2.

But this is human life: the war, the deeds,
The disappointment, the anxiety,
Imagination's struggles, far & nigh,
All human; bearing in themselves this good,
That they are still the air, the subtle food,
To make us feel existence, & to show
How quiet death is.

. . . .

Who, when this planet's ?phering time doth close,
Will be its high remembrancers: who they?
The mighty ones who have made eternal day
For Greece & England.

The cloudy rack slow journeying in the West
Like herded elephants.

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Book 2. Endymion

For who beholds
New sudden things nor ~~not~~ casts his intellectual slough[2].

— – –

Aye the count
Of mighty poets is made up; the scroll
Is folded by the muses; the bright roll
Is in Apollo's hand: our dazed eyes
Have seen a new tinge in the western skies:
The world has done its duty.

(Centinel stars'.

A rough-voic'd war against the dooming stars'

In all these descriptions there is very evident the immature delight in piling up splendours, as though that were the chief care of poetry. Yet also K. was as evidently possessed of a mind which worried out problems although his imagination was not enough under control to shut out some of his visions. Imagination is here used in the conventional sense, as a gift that makes beautiful unreal baubles. His mood towards love, his sickly & languishing apologetic weakness in that direction. Reminds one of his visions that come to Q. under the earth are (perhaps) the dreams of

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beauty that visit a poet? Constant refrain of
'loneliness' & solitude. Everywhere Keats' ?
Tremendous ambition to be among the English poets.

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Dryden. Essay of Dramatic Poetry.

Edited by Ker. Oxford. 1900.

I think there's much to be said for this as the perfection of easy, terse, expressive prose style. The formality of the 18th century has not yet becalmed it; it is not correct; but it is not at all a riot or jungle like Elizabethan prose.

35. phrases about Waller, Suckling, Denham & Cowley.

40. The old question of the Unities, of time & place. Corneille quoted.

43. of Ben Jonson & the Ancients "you track him everywhere in their snow."

51. a thing well said will be wit in all languages, to him who reads it in the original 'tis still the same; he has an idea of its excellency, tho' it cannot pass from his mind into any other expression or words than those in which he finds it.

32. "wit is best conveyed to us in the most easy language". Great thoughts dressed in common words (odd how all poets insist on this).

– Donne's rough words & deep thoughts.

54. Love seldom treated in old plays, though so popular on the stage because universal.

– sudden gusts of passion best expressed by a word or a sigh. "breaking one another".

57. The French observe the unities better than we do.

71 French verses "the coldest I have ever read".

72. As for comedy, repartee is one of its chiefest graces."

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Drydens Life & Addison
was written

This was
written

74. The English will scarcely suffer combats & objects of terror to be taken from them.

76. "beautiful accidents" may happen if unities not strictly observed. Dryden, Neander, favour English variety & freedom against the French.

79. On Shakespeare. "The largest & most comprehensive soul . . ." "he looked inwards & found her [Nature] there — Sir John Suckling set Sh. far above Ben Jonson.

81. Beaumont & Fletcher: the talk of gentlemen. Eng. language arrived at highest perfection in them.

81. Ben Jonson learned & judicious. "I admire him, but I love Shakespeare."

83. The Silent Woman. Discussion of humour. The ancients had not characters, but types. French lack humour.

85. English love of humour & eccentricity. Rhyme not fit for tragedy. Blank ~~verse~~ preserves the effect of reality & passion.

97. Upon the advantage of rhyme.

99. "The ancients would never equal themselves if they could rise & write again." They've ruin'd their style; we must attempt another.

100. Tragedy represents nature, but nature wrought up to a higher pitch.

101. Tragedy want to deal with noble persons.

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103. wishes to make out that art is like life — takes for granted that art should be like life.

104. need of draping common expressions; our language "noble, full & significant"

107. verse a rule & line by which he keeps his building compact & even'

27. Every age has a kind of universal genius.'

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Shelley's Defence of Poetry.

(This is in the small edition of Letters & Essays edited by Mrs. Shelley).

A poet "essentially a legislator & prophet." sounds as well as thoughts have relations both between each other & towards that which they represent... Hence the vanity of translation..
Every great poet must inevitably innovate upon the example of his predecessors in the exact structure of his peculiar versification.. The distinction between poets & prose writers is a vulgar error.
A poem is the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth. Poetry is ever accompanied with pleasure.
Poetry lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world & makes familiar objects be as if they were not familiar."
The great secret of morals is love; ... A man, to be greatly good, must imagine intensely & comprehensively."
A poet does ill to embody his own conceptions of right & wrong, which are usually those of his place & time, in his poetical creations, wh. participate in neither".
The insufficiency of the modern stage — no music or dancing. On the degradation of poetry "we

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hardly laugh but we smile."

"Episodes in that great poem, which all poets, like the co-operating thoughts of one great mind, have built up since the beginning of the world."

35. All high poetry is infinite ... veil after veil may be undrawn, & the inmost naked beauty of the meaning never exposed.

The rich have become richer & the poor poorer.

"The pleasure that is in sorrow is sweeter than the pleasure of pleasure itself. What would the world have been without Sh^re ac: compared with the philanthropists & thinkers.

"We want the creative faculty to imagine that wh. we know"

"for the mind in creation is as a fading coal, wh. some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness".

Poetry written when inspiration is declining.

finest poetry not produced by labour & study.

poetry "strips the veil of familiarity from the world & lays bare the naked & sleeping beauty wh. is the spirit of its forms"

Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.

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Oedipus Coloneus.
606 – 615

Oi: ω φιλτατ' Αιγεως παι, μονοις ου γιγνεται
θεοισι γηρας ουδε κατθανειν ποτε,
τα δ' αλλα συγχει πανθ' ὁ παγκρατης χρονος.
φθινει μεν ισχυς γης, φθινει δε σωματος,
θνησκει δε πιστις, βλαστανει δ' απιστια,
και πνευμα ταυτον ουποτ' ουτ' εν ανδρασιν
φιλοις βεβηκεν ουτε προς πολιν πολει.
τοις μεν γαρ ηδη τοις δ' εν υστερῳ χρονῳ
τα τερπνα πικρα γιγνεται καυθις φιλα

son of Aegeus. to the gods alone comes neither old age nor death, but all else time the all powerful brings to ruin. The strength of the land perishes. the strength of the body perishes, faith dies, & unfaith flourishes, & the same spirit is never steadfast among friends, nor from city to city. Either now or ~~in later time to come~~ bitter ~~[illegible]~~ sweet turns bitter & then sweet again.

Friday November 16th 1918.

I've no money to buy another book; besides by waiting the paper question may once more take its place in the scale giving pleasures; good books, cheap books, books that make one wish to finish them in order to have the pleasure of buying another may be built up against the wall in stationers shops. Peace is rapidly dissolving into the light of common day. You can go to London without meeting more than two drunk soldiers; only an occasional crowd blocks the street. In a day or two it will be impossible for a private to knock out the brains of an officer, as I saw done the other day in Shaftesbury Avenue. But mentally the change is marked too. Instead of feeling all day & going home through dark streets that the whole people, willing or not, were concentrated on a single point, one feels now that the whole bunch has burst asunder & flown off with the utmost vigour in different directions. We are once more a nation of individuals. Some people care for football; others for racing; others for dancing; others for — oh well, they're all running about very gaily, getting out of their uniforms & taking up their private affairs again. Coming home from the Club tonight I thought for a moment that it must still be sunset, owing to the sharp bright lights in Piccadilly Circus. The streets are crowded with people quite at their ease; & the shops blazing unshaded lights. Yet its depressing too. We have stretched our minds to consider something universal at any rate; we contract them at once to the squabbles of Lloyd George, & a General Election. The papers are unreadable. One's sense of perspective is so changed that one cannot see at first what meaning all this gossip of parties can possibly have; one can't be interested. Other people have more right to be sluggish than I have. One predicts a

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a year or two of gaiety save on the part of the professionals. They will have things their own way. Many will play football & cricket & take shooting in the country. The first effect of peace on our circle is to set Desmond loose, & to bring Gerald Shove up to London saying that he must find a way of making £500 a year. Before long the crowd of out of work intellectuals looking for places will be considerable. Desmond is doing what he knows how to ~~does~~ supremely well — ~~lapsing~~ going later & later to the office, & sometimes not going every day or taking longer for lunch, & sometimes not going for a fortnight; then back again. This he proposes to continue for ever — unless by cutting off the brass buttons he can make it do for an ordinary coat. to fold up his blue & gold coat for ever — His spirits are very high, though depressed occasionally by the question of earning a living. It came out that he means to suggest himself for Solomon Eagle's place on the New Statesman; for the Eagle is flying higher. "I know so many people who write well" he said; & if that were all, he would make a perfect Editor. After tea he told us the last section of the Keniad. I suppose it would fill a book, from start to finish. It ended, characteristically, with his promising to go to lunch — & ~~never goin~~ waiting eleven years before he saw her again. The story brought her back very plainly; perhaps his conclusion was right — one ought to pity any woman who ~~is~~ is engaged to a young Cambridge man who has never been in love before — a young Cambridge man, I should add, who has read & has by heart all the novels of Henry James.

I was interrupted somewhere on this page by the ~~arrivi~~ arrival of Mr Eliot. Mr Eliot is well expressed by his name — a polished, cultivated, elaborate young American, talking so slow, ~~as~~ so that each word seems to have special finish allotted it. But beneath the surface,

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it is fairly evident that he is very intellectual, intolerant with
strong ~~precise~~ views of his own, & a poetic creed. I'm sorry to say that
this sets up Ezra Pound & Wyndham Lewis as great poets, or
in the current phrase "very interesting" writers. He admires
Mr Joyce immensely. He produced 3 or 4 poems for us to
look at — the fruit of two years, since he works all day in a
Bank, & in his reasonable way thinks regular work good for people
of nervous constitutions. I ~~saw~~ ~~both~~ became more & more
conscious of a very intricate & highly organised framework of
belief poetic belief; owing to his caution, & his excessive
care in the use of language we did not ~~get far in~~ discover
what much about it. I think he believes in "living phrases" & in
their difference from dead ones; in writing with extreme care, in
observing all syntax & grammar; & so making this new
poetry flower on the stem of the oldest.

As an illustration of Eliot's views I may add what Desmond
has just (Monday 21st Nov.) told me; ~~that~~ D. asked him
how on earth he came to add that remark at the end of
a poem on his Aunt & the Boston Evening Transcript
that phrase about an infinitely long street, & "I like
La Rochefoucauld saying good bye" (or words to that effect)
Eliot replied that they were a recollection of Dante's
Purgatorio!

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Monday Nov. 21st.

I am overwhelmed with things that I ought to have written about; peace came dropped like a great stone into my pool, & the Eddies are still rippling out to the further bank. Has Nelly Cecil sunk beyond recall? & that concert at Shelley House, presided over, so appropriately by Bruce Richmond? For the sake of the good report of my diary let me record the fact that Nelly Cecil met the Kaiser at Hatfield: & said he appeared a small man, in a grey suit, & "his people were afraid of him - they were afraid to tell him of his motor car was late... He was romantic - very romantic." Too much space would be needed for an accurate description of Shelley House: briefly speaking it is a luxurious sham in imitation of the 18th century; but as people like the St John Hornby's never put all their eggs in one basket, I should guess, the Italian renaissance is represented too; &, Arthur Hughes shews that they patronise English art; but mainly they put their faith in George the Third. How much the annual income of the audience amounted to, I should not like to guess: they wore a substantial part of it on their backs: the furs were richly dark; the stuffs of the best black. And then the lovely music offered up before this congregation - among whom, as they say, I noticed Mrs Rathbone, Pearsall Smith, Harvey Vaughan Williams. Mr & Miss Mackenzie. However peace came & dissipated all that; & now where are we? According to Roger, on the brink of revolution; this is strictly speaking, according to Ray.

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& Ray, who is standing for Parliament as a Coalition candidate says that if ever she were tempted to hoard food, now would be the time. The lower classes are bitter, impatient, powerful & of course, lacking in reason. For example they demand ~~rooms~~ houses with 10 rooms at Guildford; & they have a prophet, Ditcher by name, who knows the truth: he knows what the brain is made of; & he has no use for this "middle class idealism" which cherishes doubts about some matters, & preaches liberty, toleration, & other humbug; for Ditcher knows the truth. These are a few facts that I gathered from Roger over a dish of tripe & leeks. I cheered him a little by reminding him of the existence of football & of King George. How they crowd — my memories of the past week! Mention of King George recalls Harry Stephen who sat like a frog with his legs akimbo, opening & shutting his large knife, & asserting with an egoism proper to all Stephens, that he knew how ~~people ought~~ to behave himself, & how other people ought to behave. Which science he taught, with success according to him, upon the Bench at Calcutta. He has need of the Royal family; ~~He~~ he wants someone descended from Egbert upon the throne; not a schoolmaster, like Wilson. The impenetrable wall of the middleclass Conservative was never more stolid; dynamite may smash it to powder; but it is impervious to reason, or imagination or humanity; ~~and~~ an educated version of the prophet Ditcher. Poor James Strachey was soft as moss, lethargic as an earthworm. James, billed at the 17 Club to lecture on "Onanism", proposes to earn his

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living as an exponent of Freud in Harley Street. For one thing, you can dispense with a degree.

But the real news of the past week is of a confidential nature. Murray has asked L: to be his secretary if, as is possible, he is chosen to represent England on the League of Nations Committee at the Peace Conference. This would mean a visit to Paris. More than this need not be said; but it is an important possibility. Coming after it, the news that I today wrote the last words of my novel reads a little flat. Five hundred & thirty eight pages!

Sat: 30th Nov.

I see I've been rather slack & I cant remember now exactly what's made me slack. Certainly not the General Election. I've reduced my reading of newspapers, though the D. N. has an extra sheet. They somehow keep it up. Mr Dacre Fox ~~[illegible]~~ bellows in the High St. McDermott demands a Government which will make the Germans pay. He prints poster after poster in red ink. I've a new niece, Judith, not welcomed, but made the best of; & Barbara has a Judith too; & Saxon denied being talking of Death without enthusiasm. He knew for certain that he would die on a certain day last summer & then—didn't.

One night we went to the Russian dancers; & it was incongruous enough to see what they offered the tolerant good tempered public who had been bellowing like bulls over the efforts of a man to nail a carpet down. They were tolerant, but, as I fancied, a little bit contemptuous of all this posing & springing against a flat blue wall. What a queer fate this — always to be the spectator of the public, never part of it. This is part of the reason why I go weekly to see K.M. up at Hampstead, for there at any rate ~~we~~ we make a public of two. On Thursday Murry came in, & we had an awkward, interesting talk. I think something or other is a little inharmonious in both of them;— in my low self conscious to be unkindling — too much of the arrogance, I suppose I feel them both too much of the underworld, with all sorts of nostrums of their own; I dont express what I & all this talk about being artists. They seem suspicious — mean. Perhaps all I mean is that they are both very Beneath the surface I expect ~~that~~ they are not at all sure of themselves, anxious for appreciation, & becomes more & & Murry wrings his brains dry, &

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hopeless of finding anything to believe in. Just like married couples where the husband admires the wife's work immensely. Arthur Ponsonby came up & spoke to us at the Club the other day. He is standing somewhere, & wants to get in, openly to prove that his side has a good case; he said he didn't much care to be in Parliament itself. A weak, moderately intelligent, kindly man, permanently puzzled, & worried too, by the strange order of the world. Living in a social class different from the one he was born into may account for this. Then we had Dr. Leys to lunch on Wednesday (27th, I put in by way of mark) He has spent 17 years in East Africa, & has a being a very sterling direct Scotchman has a terrible tale to tell about the natives. How they concentrate how bare of superfluity they are, these professional intellectual men! Printing off on our little machine began today. & now I must give my very best attention to Murry's manuscript, the Fable for Critics, which I brought home in my bag, with a view to printing.

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Tuesday Dec. 3rd.

(What odd scrap of knowledge makes me think that this is Carlyle's birthday? Perhaps because I'm reading about Froude:— I go on to wonder whether any one else is thinking of Carlyles birthday & if so whether it gives him any pleasure; & again of the curious superstition, haunting literary people, of the value of being remembered by posterity — but I had better rein myself in). I have to read for a second time Murry's poem, which I found hard to read; from reasons the opposite of ~~what~~ those that makes Eliot hard to read: Murry has a plethora of words; his poem is intricate & involved & as thick as a briar hedge: he does his thinking aloud; not making you fetch it from the depths of silence as Eliot does. We've been walking by the river, & indeed sitting beside it, so hot it is, bland, milky, & without thrill in the air. The gulls were letting themselves be carried down stream, for a diversion I suppose; little companies of three & four sliding down, & then one dives & reappears. We discussed the origin of my present fit of melancholy, & I was divinely reassured by L: so that ~~I~~ here I sit comfortable & secure; once more established in that degree of belief which makes life possible. But I leave out the analysis, which I have gone into sufficiently. I fancy all people have these spiritual tides in them — Heaven knows why. Altogether the more one thinks of it the stranger one's own organisation appears.

On Sunday, that is the 1st December we had a dinner party. Six people make a dinner party. They destroy private conversation. You have to be festive. We had Nick, Carrington, Mr. Manus & Sanger: & I think it was a successful party. We were sufficiently gay & spontaneous I think. Charlie made his little jokes. Nick was nearly silent, but appreciative. I foresee a testy middle age for Nick. Mr. Manus enjoyed her dinner. Carrington has

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more merit than most of the young. We had chairs down & abolished the sofa. I cant for the life of me remember what we talked about, but save that Charlie is emphatically despised both Herbert Fisher & Gilbert Murray. He doesnt like to be asked to meet people because theyre interesting he said. I said no, you only like failures. On Monday I went first to Harrisons with L: then walked across Regents Park & had tea with Barbara. Regents Park at 4.30 on a December afternoon is a dreary place. So many purple leaves seem to be flattened on the path. Then the park keepers begin whistling, & I remember being afraid of being shut in, as a child. Then the mist rolls up over that vast open space. On one side of you the commoner animals in the Zoo grunt & growl— chiefly pigs now, for war purposes I suppose. This did not produce a cheerful frame of mind in which to visit an invalid; & to my horror I found that she shares a room with another, a widow, whose husband was killed; & there poor woman, she sat, pretending to read a book & not to look my way, while Barbara & I gossiped, without much spirit. B. would have preferred a son: sons, she says, are more troublesome, nervous, naughty, from birth: I suppose this is the natural feeling, though not a very desirable one; assertiveness seems to her interesting. Her own baby with Nicks nose, slept in a cradle; grumbling a little, but very good she said. The future seemed to oppress her.

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Saturday, 7th Dec.

For some reason, not connected with my virtues I think I get 2 or even 3 books weekly from the Times, & they break one short choppy wave after another. It fills up the time while Night & Day lies dormant; ~~but~~ also it gives me a distinct pleasure I own to formulate rapid views of Henry James & Mr Hergesheimer; chiefly because I slip in some ancient crank of mine. But this sort of writing is always done against time; however much time I may have. For example I have spent the week (but I was interrupted 2 days, & one cut short by a lunch with Roger) over Hakluyt: who turns out on mature inspection to justify over & over again my youthful discrimination. ~~Mem~~ I write & rewrite; I am rung up & told to stop writing; the review must be had on Friday; I ~~type~~ typewrite till the messenger from the Times appears; I correct the pages ~~written here~~ in my bedroom with him sitting over the fire here.

"A Christmas number not at all to Mr Richmond's taste," he said. "Very unlike the supplement style."

"Gift books, I suppose?" I suggested.

"O no, Mrs Woolf, it's ~~done~~ for the advertisers."

But to retrace. On Monday I lunched with Roger in order to hear the following story.

Mrs McColl to Mr Cox of the London Library:

"Have you the Voyage Out by Virginia Woolf?"

"Virginia Woolf? Let me see; she was a Miss Stephen, daughter of Sir Leslie. The sister is Mrs Clive Bell I think. Strange to see what's become of those two girls. Brought up in such a nice home too. But then, they were never baptised."

[illegible]

Roger & I get on very well now; more genuine & free than we were, under the shadow of Gordon Square. We agree on many points; & he, at least, perceives the isolation of our little group in the large hostile world of MacColls & Duckworths. Then we discuss prose; & as usual some book is had out, & I have to read a passage over his shoulder. Theories are fabricated. Pictures stood on chairs. Then I become rather random & desperate. Wolfe brings in a picture— The question is about a blue & green on the midmost apple. Does it interfere with the violet on the edge of the potato? "Cut it out; well see the way the colours show up over there:— try varnish them." "I think its the best thing I've done yet." "O yes. There's more life in it— its very strong, Wolfe, very strong."

At last, inevitably late, I go on to the 17 Club, where Mr. Manus & L. sit in the upper room, correcting proofs. But Couch has only sent a batch. Anyhow, I was too late to help; but not to pour out tea for Miss Matthaei; Why should a woman of her sense apologise all her life long because she is an unattractive woman? She looks up sidelong, like a child who has done wrong. And yet she has more in her head than all the crop heads put together. Alix I found intoning pompously downstairs, with a perverted likeness to a colonel of the upper classes holding forth upon the iniquity of Bolshevism. Like her theme is the iniquity of colonels; the method seems much the same; even the voice.

Friday, as I say was spent writing by me; by Leonard in having lunch with Will A.F. & correcting

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more proofs. No sooner had I done a little type setting, or ruled off the hour & a half before dinner in which to read my distinguished American novelist recommended by Mr Galsworthy, than Lottie admitted Sydney Waterlow. My only hope for passing the time was some sort of introspective confidence on his part; but no such luck. He is prosperous, complacent, self assured even to the extent of confronting the disapproval of Gordon Square unabashed. He is now on the round of his friends, not, he was careful to explain in order to test us, but to enjoy our society. May Sheepshanks had been summoned to dine with us in order to discuss the Review, & Macdonald's treachery. Paler, perhaps thinner, fading into middle age imperceptibly, with the same flavour of bitterness against a word — 'a world of upper class women, this at the present moment, who ask for an indemnity. Yet Compared with the greater variety of my acquaintance, she comes out abler, better informed, more rational than I remembered her in the days of Fitzroy Square. But still she ~~enjoys~~ accepts her "nice evening" as the grudging poor accept a charity which is rather less than they deserve.

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Tuesday 10th.

Sunday was memorable to me for another visit to Shelley House — when I actually shook hands with Miss Sands, Katie, & Elena Rathbone. All expressed great surprise at seeing me. As if I were a strange bird joining a flock of the same species. I felt strange enough, but oddly familiar with their ways after the first. Elena was almost like an old friend — a very old friend who persists, remembering what went on before I took my dive & she hers. She pressed me, almost affectionately, to come & see them. I shall do it with misgivings. Suppose we have absolutely nothing to say? All her charming frank caressing manner may vanish. And then there is the eternal insoluble question of clothes. Katie rather ensanguined & flesh covered, but with a great dignity & amplitude of feature, sitting very upright, eyes half closed, in the front of the room listening to Ravel & Schumann, which she said she admired equally.

On Monday I paid what has now become my weekly visit to Katherine. Murry was there, which makes it a little stiff, though I like them both, & her better as a wife. He scarcely speaks, makes one feel that most speaking is useless, but as he has a brain of his own I don't mind this. Besides it is more shyness than purpose. I told such stories as I could think of; Murry then explained that he had a confession to make. It only amounted to the fact that he has bought his brother a hand press, upon which some short poems of his are to be printed, beautifully, like Kelmscott books. Arthur is

[illegible]

learning at a Polytechnic, & wishes to do 'art' printing. I rather suspect Arthur's views of art. But anyhow we are to do what we like with Murry's long poem. At present to give it McDermott seems the most feasible plan, when the great red posters are all issued, which have begun to paper Richmond during the past few days. "Payment, Punishment . . . & some other P. is the policy they advocate. We shall probably vote for no one. A wet day: but we went out having "practically" finished Kew Gardens: I mean its all ready to print save a few lines. Light in my study gives out about 3.30. Now I shall try to do a few lines of Eliot before we go away. There is one of the usual kitchen intrigues to have Lizzy & children to Asheham for Christmas. Nelly doesn't like to ask me; Lottie makes up a rigmarole about saving us expense & this being the last time that she will be able to leave home. How terrible it is to be in this position to other grown people!

Monday 16th

Back from a week end with Roger. Left, therefore, rather sore with talk, though his range is so wide, & we both have such a number of things to say that I, certainly, was neither bored nor satiated. Pamela was there, very rounded, supple, with a likeness to some naked wood creature in an Italian picture; she has the yellow brown complexion too. I suspect that children take the shape of their parents the other way about; a vivacious sociable enthusiastic father produces a quiet, unselfish not & rather passive daughter. She is only sixteen, but mature in manner, as the result of living with grown up people. It was polling day on Saturday in Guildford, as in other parts of the world, & Roger very gloomy about the future of the world. No doubt he will soon forget about politics. The war is already almost forgotten. All Sunday, in spite of rain & fog he painted till the sky was black, having been grey through the time of daylight. I feel little hope about his pictures, but had to counterfeit an opinion as to the effect produced on the solidity of a bowl by a morning's work on it. He said that he grudged every hour of daylight spent not painting, since age draws near, & he must say what he wants to say before he dies. Age he proposes to spend alone, working all day long. At last he seems to see what he wants has always.

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tried to do. We had some melancholy revelations about the treachery of certain friends towards the Omega. Roger's great point is that though superficially unbalanced & exaggerated his sense of balance is always right in the end; he is always magnanimous & forgiving, however much weight he may lay upon imaginary or semi-imaginary grievances. The Omega curse is that his artists accept commissions independently of the Omega. For that & other reasons the poor shop has been a source of unmitigated disillusion to him — a weariness & grievance. People hate art & him for loving it is now a frequent burden of his talk. Nor did I shew myself one of the Elect, with regard to painting at least. We visited the National Gallery together this morning; I thought a Rembrandt "very fine" which to him was mere melodrama. A little El Greco conveyed little until he illumined it; showed how it held more real colour than any other picture there. Then the Ingres was repulsive to me; & to him one of the most marvellous of designs. I always feel, too, that to like the wrong thing, or fail in sufficiently liking the right jars on him, like false notes, or sentimentality in writing.

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Monday 17th Dec.

This I cannot help fearing will be my last opportunity for writing before I go to Asheham on Friday, though I shall continue there, God being willing, in some form of new book. Tomorrow I go to K.M.: on Thursday I have tea with the Richmonds, & perhaps dine at the Club: so Friday is reached without any interval between tea & dinner; & even today I am stealing what belongs to Sophocles, before Mrs Hamilton arrives at 7 to address the Guild. Suppose I buy a block with detachable leaves, I think I shall snare a greater number of loose thoughts. No doubt this is pure ~~x~~ fancy, but then so much goes; mental affairs are controlled by fancy. Nessa has asked us to have the children for a fortnight when the new baby is born. This is now imminent, & she fixes the 28th for the exact day. The servants go to Guildford for a week, ~~so th~~ in order that we may be free from Liz & her offspring. We shall have one week entirely alone at Asheham, the greatest & most unmixed pleasure this world affords; enhanced very much in my mind by the absence of servants, so that often we are alone in the house. I am going to read through my novel & determine what to do with it. L's book is almost done; February will see it finished most likely. We have printed off the text of Kew Gardens,

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& got an estimate from McDermott for printing Murry's poem.
He asks £4.10. which to us seems little, for 200
copies of a 24 page book. We supply the paper, & the
cover. Possibilities are opened up I think.
Weather has been so warm that I don't think I've had a fire in
my study more than 3 or 4 times, & that only when we
were printing in the afternoon. Influenza seems to be
over, though Lottie had an attack lasting ~~[illegible]~~ an hour
or two on Saturday. Iced cakes are possible, but so
far no more than that. As for public news, the
war already seems an unimportant incident, one gov
political dodges, & at this moment the newsboys are
shouting that Russia prepares for war. It is
difficult to see how even a Jingo can now believe
in any good from war, or any ideal or anything, one feels
tempted to add undertaken by bodies of human beings in
concert. It is said that Labour did well, the
Coalition only moderately, at the polls. Ray is
said to have a good chance; ~~[illegible]~~ – we voted on
Saturday, but L. overcome with panic, very likely
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Mon. Jan 20th 1919

I mean to copy this out, when I can buy a book, so I omit the flourishes proper to the New Year. It is not money this time that I lack, but the capacity, after a fortnight in bed, to make the journey to Fleet Street. Even the muscles of my right hand feel as I imagine a servants hand to feel. Curiously enough, I have the same stiffness in manipulating sentences, though by rights I should be better equipped mentally now than I was a month ago. The fortnight in bed was the result of having a tooth out, & being tired enough to get a headache a long dreary affair that receded & advanced, much like a mist on a January day. One hour writing daily is my allowance for the next few weeks; & having hoarded it this morning, I may spend part of it now, since L. is out, & I am much behindhand with the month of January. I note, however, that this diary writing does not count as writing; since I have just re-read my years diary, & am much struck by the rapid haphazard gallop at which it swings along, sometimes indeed jerking almost intolerably over the cobbles. Still, if it were not written rather faster than the fastest typewriting, it would never be written at all; & the advantage of the method is that sweeps up accidentally several stray matters that I should exclude if I took thought; & it is these accidents that are the diamonds in the

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rubbish heap. If Virginia Woolf, at the age of 50, when she sits down to build her memoirs out of these books, is unable to make a phrase as it should be made, I can only condole with her, & remind her of the existence of the fireplace, where she has my leave to burn these pages to so many black films with red eyes. But how I envy her the task I am preparing for her. There is none I should like better. Already my 37th birthday next Saturday is robbed of some of its terrors. Partly for the benefit of this elderly lady (no subterfuge will then be possible: 50 is elderly, though, I agree, not old) partly to give the year a solid foundation I intend to spend the evenings of this week of captivity in making out an account of my friendships & their present condition, with some account of my friends characters; & to add an estimate of their work, & a forecast of their future works. The lady of fifty will be able to say how near to the truth I come; but I have written enough for tonight (only 15 minutes, I see). I admit I dont like thinking of the lady of 50. Courage however. Roger is past that age, & still capable of feeling & enjoying & playing a very considerable part in life.

Today is Wednesday January 22nd. Two

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days more were spent in bed, & today counts as my first of complete health. I even wrote a sentence of Alterations & Additions this morning. I have a book on Meredith to do for the Times, & we walked this afternoon, so I am back again nearly in my old position. As I cant get up to London & only see little framed pictures of Alix & Fredegond sitting by the fire here, I might attempt that solid foundation which I think necessary.
How many friends have I got? There's Lytton, Desmond, Saxon, they belong to the Cambridge stage of life; very intellectual cut free from Hyde Park Gate, connected with Thoby; but I can't put them in order, for there are too many. Ka & Duncan, for example both come rather later; they belong to Fitzroy days; the Oliviers & all that set are stamped as the time of Brunswick Square; Clive I put a little aside; later still there are the Cropheads, Alix, Carrington, Barbara, Nick, Bunny. I must insert, too, the set that runs parallel, but does not mix, ~~so~~ distinguished by their social & political character, headed [illegible] by Margaret, & including people like Goldie [illegible] Hamilton, & intermittent figures such as Matthaei, Hobson, the Webbs, — no, I cant include ~~either~~ the darkies, or Dr. Leys, though they stand for the [illegible] occasional visitor who lunches & retires to L's room to talk seriously. I have not placed Ottoline, or Roger; & again there are Katherine & Murry, & the latest of all Hope Mirrlees, who recalls Pernel & Pippa, & outlying figures such as Ray. Further I must

up to

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omit, for reasons which if my account gets written I might
give; & Eliot I liked on the strength of one visit, & shall
probably see more of, owing to his poems which we began
today to set up. This is a very partial account, but
I shall never place half of them accurately unless I begin
straight away. Lytton & Desmond & Saxon then. Well, I
cherish a considerable friendship for each of them; the worst of it
is how seldom we meet. With Lytton at Tidmarsh, &
Desmond till last month tethered to a stool, months pass
without a sight of them. The season of letter writing is over
for all of us, I think; or perhaps we need different correspondents.
Brilliant letters we wrote each other once, partly for the
sake of being brilliant, & we were getting to know each
other, & there was a thrill about it (I speak of my own
feelings.) But when we do meet there is nothing to
complain of. Lytton is said to be more tolerant & less
witty; Desmond, they say, needs a glass of wine; Saxon
has his rheumatism & his hopeless love. Lytton again is
famous these last six months, but as that was a
matter of course since he was six months old there is
not much surprise or change in that. Moreover, I
hear he has abandoned his Asquiths, & they are provided
with some one else. Nothing is easier, & more intimate
than a talk with Lytton. If he is less witty he is
more humane. Presumably he is now preparing to
fly, but as his alliance is not with me, the direction he
flies in makes very little difference. I like Carrington
though. She has increased his benignity. O yes. if he

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were to walk in this moment we should talk about books & life & our intimate feelings as freely as we ever did, & with the same sense of having hoarded a great deal peculiarly fit for the other.

[24th Jan] Oddly enough, the day after writing this sentence I got into touch with Lytton unexpectedly on the telephone, & he is to dine here next Friday. But to resume. There are three words knocking about in my brain to use of Stracheys — a prosaic race, lacking magnanimity, shorn of atmosphere. As these words have occurred almost automatically, I daresay there is some truth in them. All the unpleasantness that I wish to introduce into my portrait of Lytton is contained in them as if in deep wells. I shall only need a drop or two for his portrait; but I fancy something of the kind is perceptible in him too; far more in James, Oliver & Marjorie. Roger's version is that all, except Lady S., lack generosity. There, or thereabouts, lie their faults. ~~[illegible]~~ But then one must combine them with ~~these~~ a great variety of mental gifts so that the faults are spread fairly thin. One might attribute what I mean in Lytton ~~&~~ to lack of physical warmth, care at heart, to lack of vitality warming lack of creative power, a failure of vitality to eke out his him not to be spendthrift but to eke out his right to a gifts parsimoniously, & faintly assume his In matters of superior share of comfort & opulence. In appearance nor is notion this has a slightly cumbrous ~~[illegible]~~ magnanimous at the he ever unthinkingly ~~generous~~ generous & magnanimous that risk of himself. Mentally, of course it produces ~~style~~ attitude which metallic & almost conventional ~~reach~~ being first rate. It prevents his writing from ~~reach~~ being first rate. It lacks originality; it is brilliant journalism; it is a superb rendering written down of the old tune.

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these words are too emphatic; one does not get them tempered & combined with all those charming & subtle brilliant qualities which ~~produce~~ make ~~a remarkable & lovable~~ him as he is. In the flesh. But when I think of a Strachey, I think of someone infinitely cautious, elusive, unadventurous. ~~[illegible]~~ To the common stock of our set they have added phrases, gestures, & witticisms, but never any new departure; never an Omega, a Post impressionist movement, nor even a country cottage, or a printing press. We Stephen's, yes, & even Clive with all his faults, had the power of initiative, & the vitality to carry our wishes into effect, because we wished too strongly to be ~~checked~~ chilled by ridicule or checked by difficulty. Even in the matter of taking Tidmarsh, Lytton had to be propelled from behind, & without Carrington to drudge through the chaotic stage he would never have left Hampstead, or ceased to flit dismally from his study to the British Museum, & from there to Cambridge.